The new aspect of our society is network society. We have defined society in linguistics, we have defined society in sociology, however what we need to include and at no cost in modern time can we exclude is network society. It is space less, members of a network society do not live in one place and it has various types of impact on language. It is a new phenomena, relatively newer phenomena and it is going to impact many aspects of our lives in the coming days.

We want to look at a relationship between language and network society and through network society, we also include media and then the change in language in the context of media and network society is what is another emerging area in applied linguistics that we need to understand. Media and network society together and the role of language in these 2 has has emerged and created a huge potential for discussions in change and the changing perspective of language has visible implications and that we need to account for in order to understand applied linguistics, that is the issues in applied linguistics.

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- Network Society
- Implications and changes in language for the newly emerging society

Some of the things that we need to understand is network society itself and its implications and changes in language for the newly emerging society. What consists of network society, we know about natural language that is spoken in our society and the way language is used in network society is what we want to look at and for that we want to invite Dr Om Prakash of

the Gautam Buddha University to share his perspectives on how we understand network society for applied linguistics perspective.

(Dr Om Prakash starts his presentation.)

We are talking about language, media and society. And I am sure majority of the audience comprises of young people, students so, I will go by little storytelling before I get to the main topic. If you look at the human history, I will start with agrarian age because before that there is no point talking. So, if you look at the march of civilisation from agrarian age to industrial age to service industry, then information technology and next wave is predicted to be the age of nanotechnology.

And these are not simple terms, they have encoded socio-cultural history of human civilisation, each phase and each milestone in the history has its own, a very elaborate development. The 3 terms here language, media and network society, you all understand media, I will not be nerve racking up on that, you all know language and I will go by the etymological definition of language, I do not want to a talking about language as a social phenomena because you are all familiar.

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So, I will be talking about network society and also talking about the implications for language used in network society. So, this talk is about language in network society, most of you may be familiar with network society, term network society. Perhaps it was coined in Japan in 1960s. It reports it 1973 when and also proposal by Daniel Bell, who talks about the

post-industrialist society, coming of a post-industrialist society, so this term, network society. And it was it was you know documented very extensively by Manuel Castells in 3 volumes.

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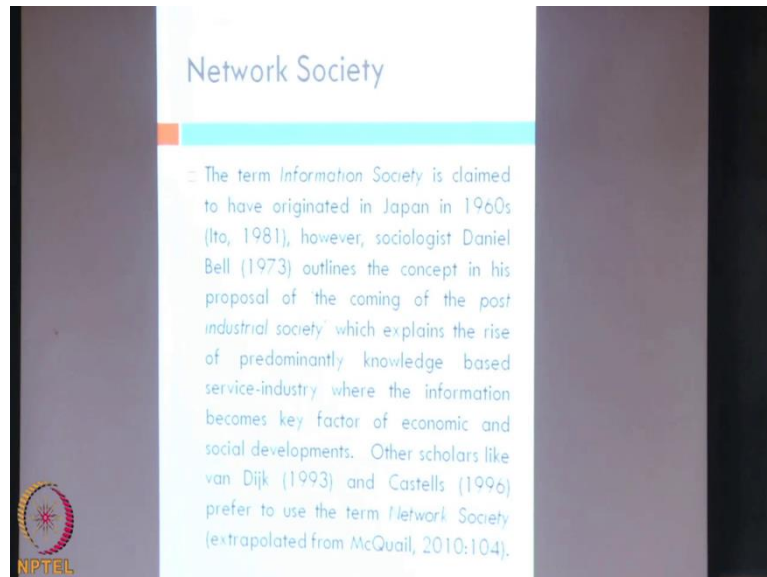
So, we begin with that. The term information Society is claimed to have originated in Japan in 1960s and the coming of post-industrial society of what Daniel Bell may reclaim, he also uses the same term and linguists like Van Djik and Castells, who is a social largest, they prefer quality network society.

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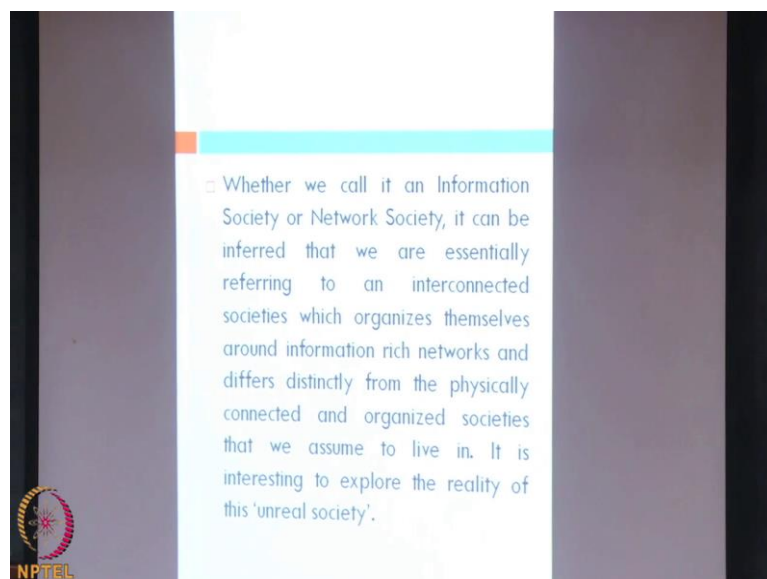
Whether we call it network society or information Society, we are talking about a different society altogether inherited from post-industrial developments. And the society is not a kind

of physical society we are all similar with and we live in, this society is very configured society beyond boundaries and beyond the limitations of time.

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The structural changes in new social order, in the backdrop of exponential growth in communication technology is a very comprehensive document in 3 volumes by Manuel Castells. And it says the Information Age: Economy, Society, and Culture. You can go and get details of it.

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But this is how he defines network society. A society whose social structure is made of networks powered by microelectronic based information and communication technology. By

social structure I understand the organisational arrangements of humans in their relations of production, consumption, experience and power expressed in meaningful communication coded by culture. This is what Emanuel Castle defines network society as.

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If you want to look at the size and reach of this digitally connected society, there is a there is a survey why we are social, August 2015, done in India. And out of total population of 1285 million, a total of 350 million people are active Internet users. 134 million people are active social media users, 590 million people are unique mobile users, 97 million people are active mobile social users in India.

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And if you look at the population size and the kind of platform they are using now, 53% of the total population that I talked about is on Facebook, 44% are Whatsapp users, 40% are surfing Google, 34% have Twitter accounts, 29% are connected with LinkedIn, 19% are on Instagram, 18% connect through wechat, 17% are Pinterested, 12% share on Tumblr and 11% Snapchat users. So, this is the size and volume of the members of this network society in India. This is data from India.

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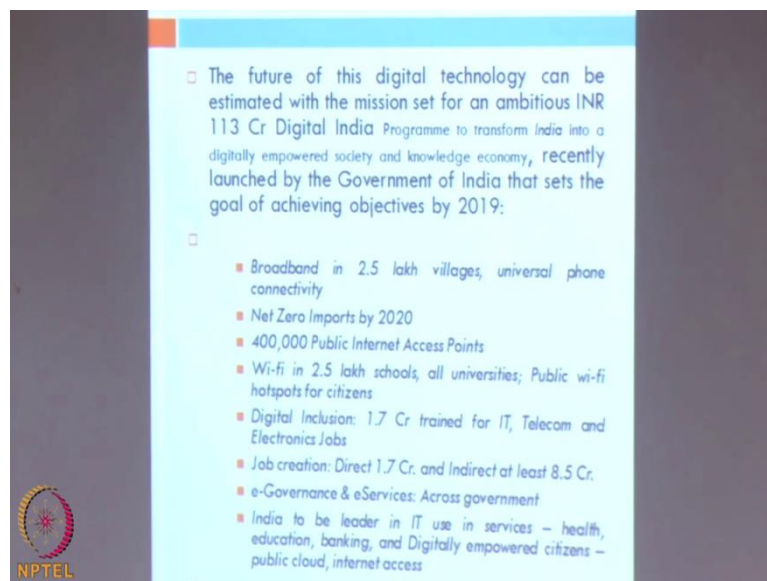
Now if you look at the future of this digital growth, recently launched program by this present Central government Digital India program, and if you look at our objectives of this program, so they have set a goal for 2019 and they want to achieve a broadband in 2.5 lakh villages, universal phone connectivity, net 0 imports by 2020, 400,000 public Internet access points, Wi-Fi in 2.5 like schools or universities, public Wi-Fi hotspots for citizens, digital Inclusion, 1.7 crore trained for IT, telecom and electronic jobs.

Job creation, direct job creation 1.7 crores and indirect 8.5 crores, E governance or e-services across all government operations and India to be leader in IT use in services, health, education, banking and digitally empowered citizens - public cloud and Internet access. This is an ambitious plan by government of India.

Now, you can see a parallel digital society that we are creating and my focus is on this interface. Language used in real society and the forms we use in real life in the society and also the language forms and the contents that are present and being used and consumed in this

digital space. So, I will be negotiating between these 2 virtual and real space, this is what I am going to talk about.

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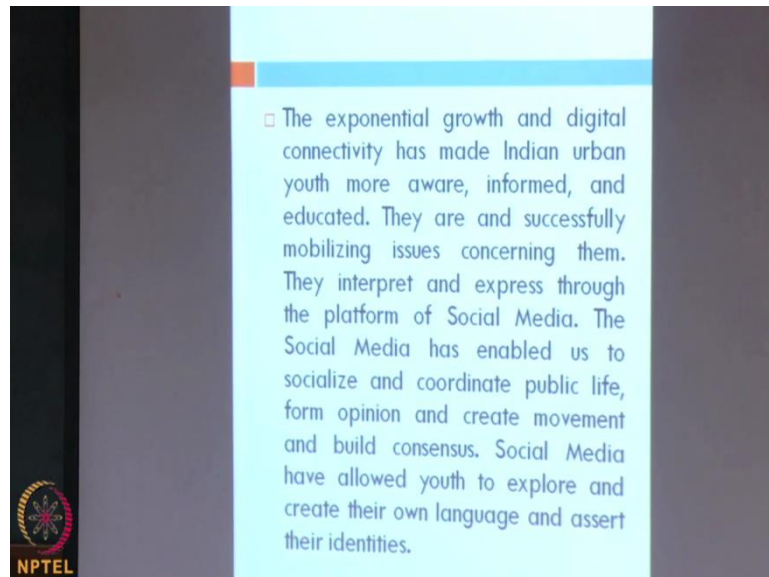
The exponential growth and digital connectivity has made Indian urban youth more aware and I do not have the statistical data for people who are above 30, their percentage of engagement in this digital media. But predominantly we are young population globally, so I have taken this idea that they are successfully mobilising issues concerning them, if you look at Arab Spring for example, that is the best example of power of digital media, you can see the Arab Spring, what happened, how people mobilised opinions and what happened.

You can see Anna movement for example, it was a middle-class uprising during Anna movement and digital media had played a very serious role in mobilising opinion. Not everyone reached Ramlila Maidan but entire country was standing behind him. The social media has enabled us to socialise and coordinate public life from opinion and create movement and build consensus. Social media has allowed youth to explore and create their own language and assert their own identities.

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The process of digitisation may have started as a technology revolution but gradually it has acquired the status of a social revolution or social phenomenon that has transformed the process of socialisation.

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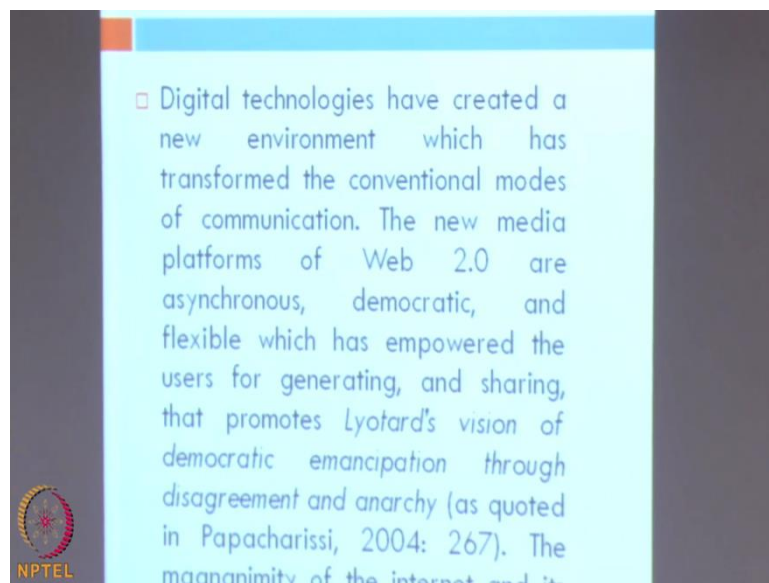
Digital technologies have created a new environment which has transformed which has transformed the conventional modes of communication. The new media platforms of Web 2.0, I mean if you prefer to Web 1, the difference between Web 1 and Web 2 is that, Web 2 has allowed you to have user generated content. So, it is truly democratic and emancipated space now we are in. And it also you know promotes Lyotard's vision of democratic emancipation through disagreement and anarchy. The magnanimity of Internet and its

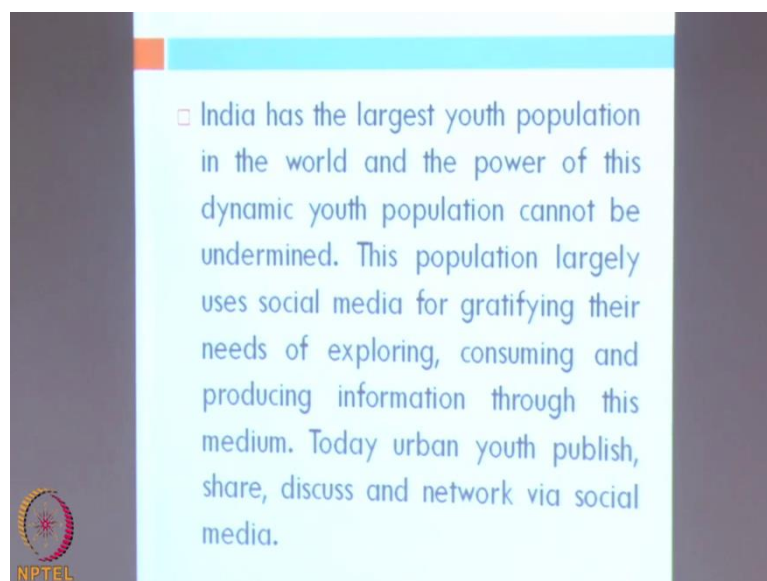consequent influence on the language can be understood in terms of Crystal's remarks, David Crystal, which says…

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□ Language being such a sensitive index of social change, it would be surprising indeed if such a radically innovative phenomenon did not have a corresponding impact on the way we communicate. And so it can be argued. Language is at the heart of the Internet, for Net activity is interactivity. ……. The Internet is not just a technological fact; it is a social fact, ……and its chief stock-in-trade is language.
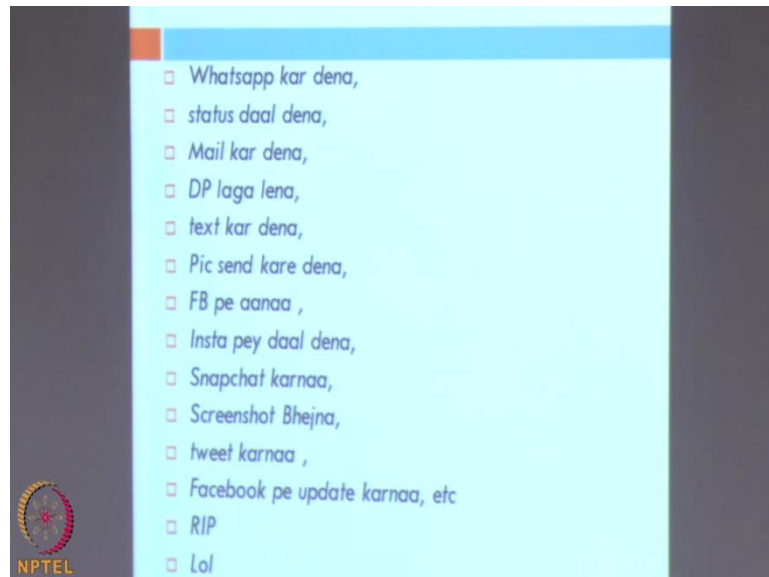
□ (Crystal 2004:237).

That language being such a sensitive index of social change, it will be surprising indeed if such a radically innovative phenomenon did not have a corresponding impact on the way we communicate. And so it can be argued that language is at heart of Internet for Net activity and interactivity. The Internet is not just technological fact, it is a social fact and the chief stock in trade is language.

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□ India has the largest youth population in the world and the power of this dynamic youth population cannot be undermined. This population largely uses social media for gratifying their needs of exploring, consuming and producing information through this medium. Today urban youth publish, share, discuss and network via social media.

The new terms that has been coined in social media, Crystal calls them net (())(12:52). Indian has largest youth population…

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- Whatsapp kar dena,
- status daal dena,
- Mail kar dena,
- DP laga lena,
- text kar dena,
- Pic send kare dena,
- FB pe aanaa ,
- Insta pey daal dena,
- Snapchat karnaa,
- Screenshot Bhejna,
- tweet karnaa ,
- Facebook pe update karnaa, etc
- RIP
- Lol

Look at these these words and you can find any corresponding, the 1ˢᵗ part is you know the words used in digital media and the second part is, it can be any language. I have used in the compound words but it can be any language, you can have Tamil, you can have Telugu, you can have Kannada, anything. So, Whatsapp kar dena, status Dal dena, mail kar dena, DP laga dena, text kar dena, pics send kar dena, FB pe ana, inst ape daal dena, snap chat karna, screenshot bhejna, tweet karna, a series of compound words. And I am sure you must have corresponding things in Tamil as well, right.

So, how do you say, to change DP, what do you see in Tamil? So, we just start listing these terms in any language. Right. RIP, when Prof Kalam unfortunately collapsed in Shillong midnight and we started getting Whatsapp messages and let me tell you Manjiri and Rhea sitting here, they work with me, they are the one who were making me understand these new words, most of the time we ask them for, they are my mobile encyclopedia for this young generation language.

So, RIP I started getting messages about that unfortunate death of Kalam and then everyone wrote RIP, RIP by the end of the message. And I could not figure out honestly what is RIP and almost 7 or 8 days after his death I could decode it and it was rest in peace. Right. Similarly LOL, conventionally it should be 'lots of love', but it is not that, what is that? You

have whole dictionary online, that is called Urban dictionary and if you go to the urban dictionary, the entire idea of the term and the semantic representation changes.

Frapping for example, I saw frapping, I could not guess the meaning, and people who use Facebook know what is frapping. Right. But I am not on the Facebook by the way. So, so, every day we are coining new words, we do not know to what extent how long they will survive, what is the PLC, what you call in management, 'product life-cycle', so these are new products in language and we do not know the life-cycle but they are prevalent these days. Now look at these 3 words friend, defriend, which are familiar, what is defriend and what is unfriend, so unfriend and defriend, but they have got semantic representations.

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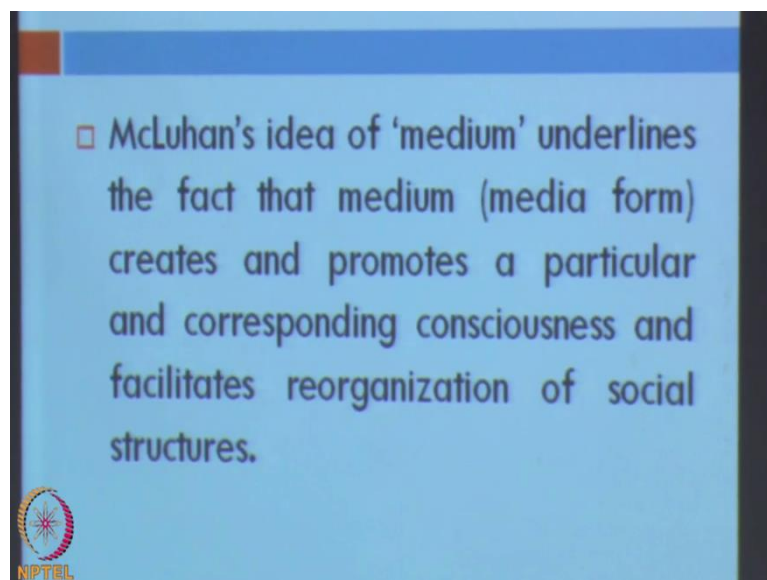
Most of you may be familiar with this name called McLuhan and he was a Canadian philosopher in media. And this famous quote by McLuhan global village, the term coined by McLuhan, and he said that, he said that medium is the message, right and this is what exactly, almost 40 years back he predicted and we can see today. The Medium underlines the fact that medium or the media form that by using today creates and promotes a particular and corresponding consciousness and facilitates reorganisation of social structures.

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Crystal imagines a situation and as a linguist, it is very early to predict such kind of things but Crystal predicts that we are moving towards a homogeneous world, linguistically homogeneous world. And then we are moving towards an ideal bilingualism where in order to be connected with the world community, you require English, one language which is English in this case, language of the technology. And the other language will be your mother tongue to connect with the local population and for global population, global audience, you need to have English. English is going to supersede all other languages and there is going to be an ideal bilingual situation, this is what Crystal predicts and he says that…

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It is perfectly possible to develop a situation in which intelligibility and identity happily coexist. The situation is the formula one of bilingualism but I bilingualism where one of the language is within the speaker is a global language and English here in case, providing access to whole community and the other is a well resourced regional language providing access to the local community. The 2 functions can be seen as complementary responding to different needs and it is because the functions are so different that a world of linguistic diversity can in principle continue to exist in a world united by a common language and that is English. This is what, Crystal's version is.
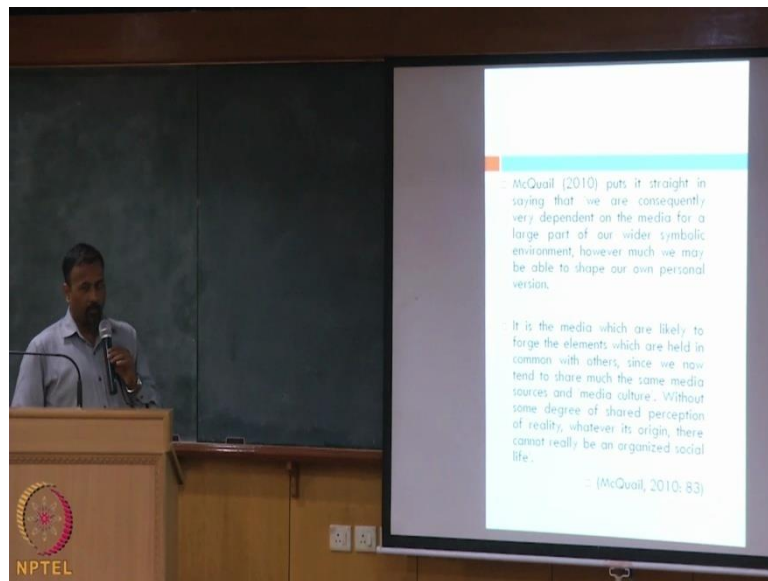
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Thompson observes that media have created a new kind of public sphere which is despatialized and non-dialogical in character. And if we consider it to be true, then in this non-dialogical text, the meaning is more social than textual with many gaps which are being filled in by the viewers or the readers.

McQuail puts it straight saying that we are consequently very dependent on media for a large part of our wider symbolic environment, however much we may be able to shape our own personal versions, see there is a theory called gratifications theory in media that says that you know for gratifying our needs, there are the hierarchy of needs and we for gratifying the needs, we turn to media.

And the another theory says that you know, that is called known as agenda setting theory in media which says that media does not tell you what to think but media definitely tells you what to think about. So, this is how our perceptions and views about the surroundings are being shaped by media. It is the media which are likely to force the elements which are held in common with others since we now tend to share much the same media sources and media culture. Without some degree of shared perception of reality, whatever its origin, there cannot really be an organised social life.

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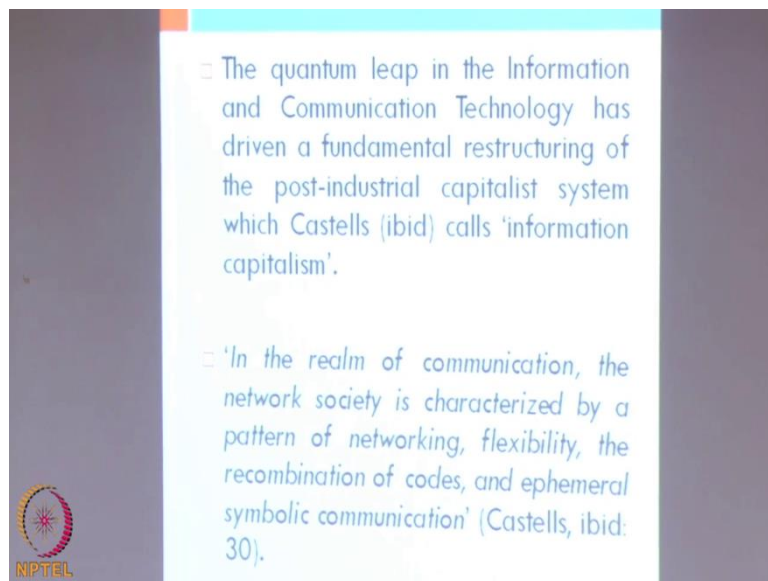
In the realm of communication and the network society is characterised by a pattern of networking, flexibility, the recombination of codes and ephemeral symbolic communication.

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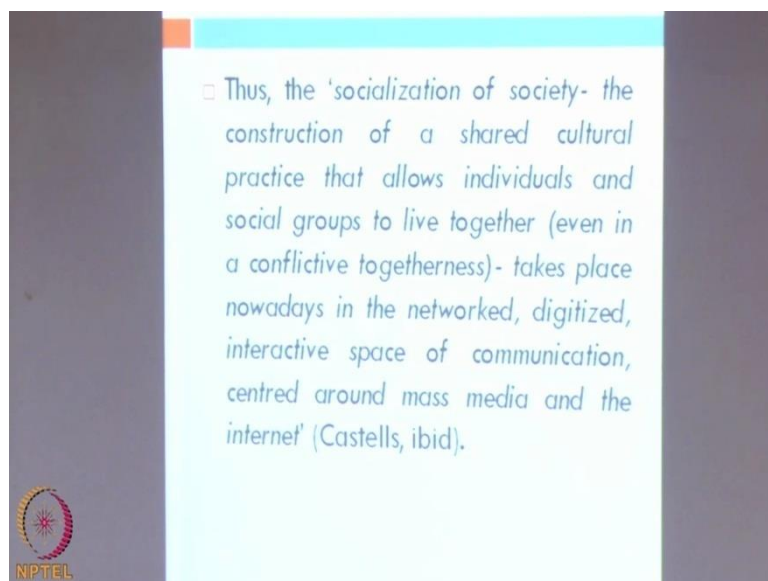
Thus others the socialisation of society, the construction of a shared cultural practice that allows individuals and social groups to live together even in conflicting togetherness thus plays nowadays in networked, digitised, interactive space of communication centered around mass media and the Internet.

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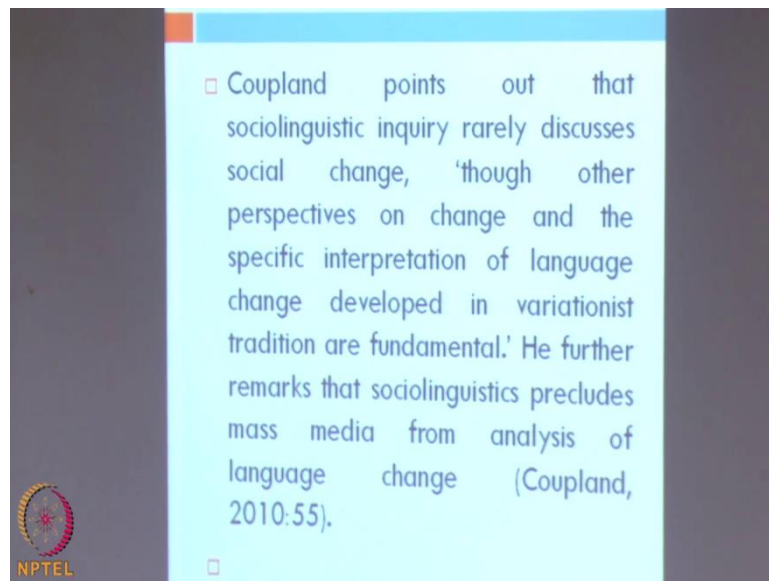
So, why I am pointing out these things and why I am talking about these things is that we need to understand that we are, we are into a very early stage of a revolution, social revolution and the digital revolution that has created a digital space which is so pervasive that we cannot imagine, I mean today if you say someone that you are off-line, being off-line is so offending you know. You cannot imagine that you are off-line, you are not connected with the network. Now, what is this network, how do you perceive this network? And why is it so essential to be in the network? Right?

So, Coupland points out that the socio linguistic enquiry really discusses social change, though other perspectives on change and specific interpretation of language change developed in variationist tradition are fundamental. He further remarks that socio linguistics precludes mass media from the analysis of language change.

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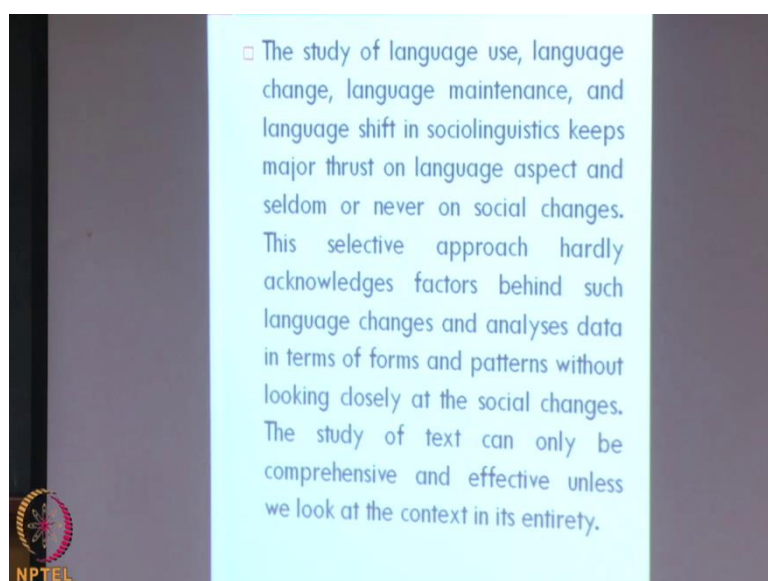
The study of language use, language change, language maintenance, language shift in socio linguistics major thrust on language aspect and seldom or never on social changes. This selective approach hardly acknowledges factors behind such language changes and analyses data in terms of forms and pattern without looking closely at the social changes. The study of text can only be compressive and effective unless we took, we look at the context in its entirety. Right.

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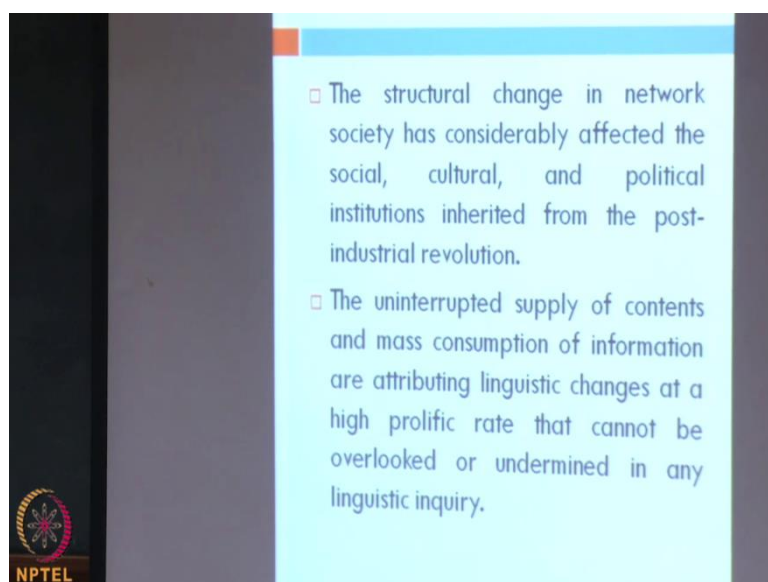
The structural change in networked society has considerably affected the social, cultural, political situations inherited from post-industrial society. The uninterrupted supply of

contents and mass consumption of information are attributing linguistic changes at a high prolific rate but cannot be overlooked or undermined in any linguistic enquiry.

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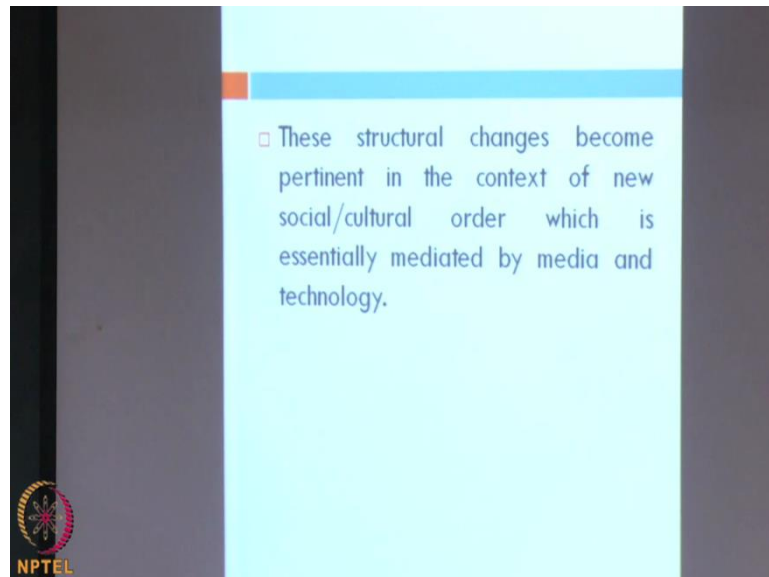
These structural changes become pertinent in the context of new social cultural order which is essentially mediated by media and technology.

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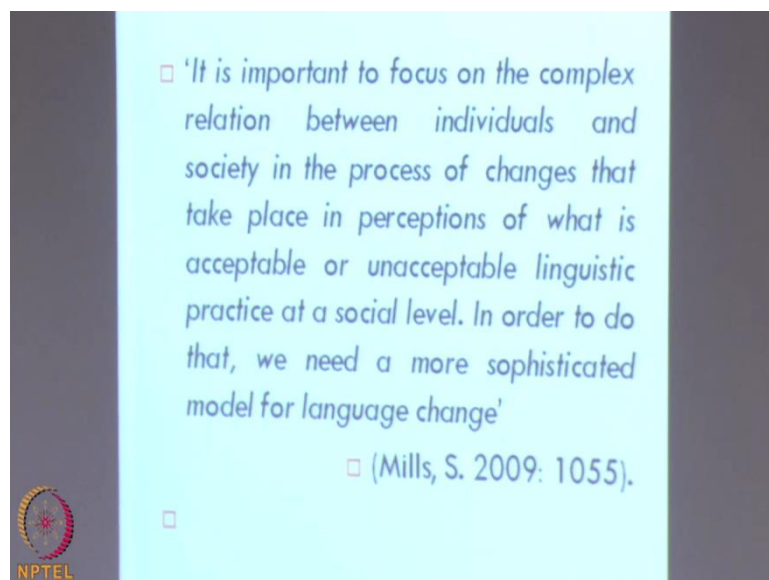
And it is important and this is Sara Mills, important to focus on complex relations between individual and society in the process of change that takes place in perceptions of what is acceptable or unacceptable linguistic act is at a social level. In order to do that we need a more sophisticated model for language change. Basically what I am trying to say is that

studying text is not alone important, we need to focus on context as well in which these texts are being used because with this pervasive media and intervening digital technology, the text, the meaning are less textual and more social. This is what I want to point out.

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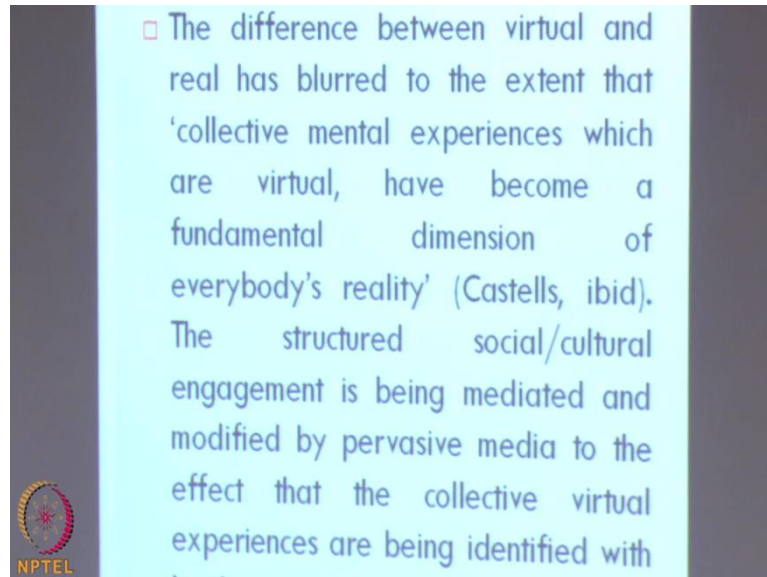
The difference between virtual and real has blurred to the extent that collective mental experiences which are virtual have become a fundamental dimension of what you call as reality. The structured social cultural engagement has been mediated and modified by pervasive media to the effect that collective virtual experiences are being identified by the people who may never meet in real space and time.

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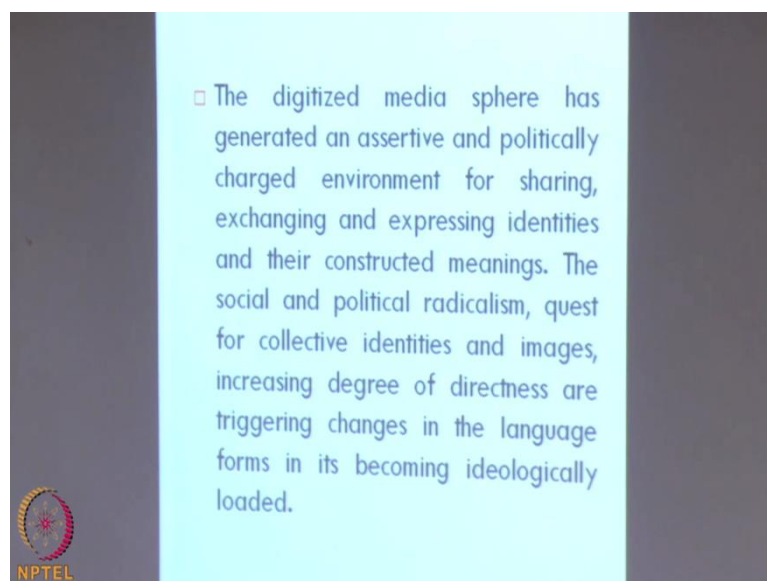
The digitised media sphere has generated an assertive and politically charged environment for sharing, exchanging and expressing identity and they are constructed meanings. The social and political radicalism, quest for collective identities and images, increasing degree of directness are triggering changes in the language forms and it is becoming ideologically loaded.

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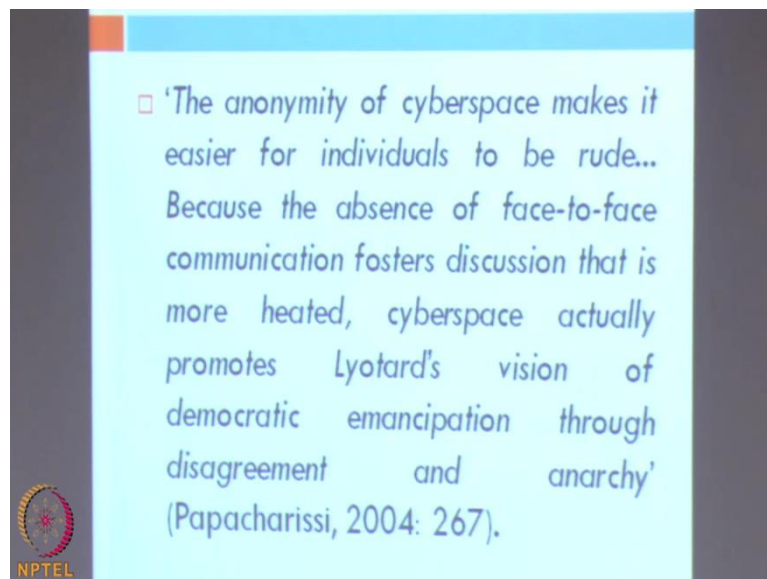
And anonymity of cyberspace makes it easier for individuals to be rude… Because the absence of face-to-face communication fosters discussion that is more hated, cyberspace actually promotes Lyotard's vision of democratic emancipation through disagreement and anarchy.

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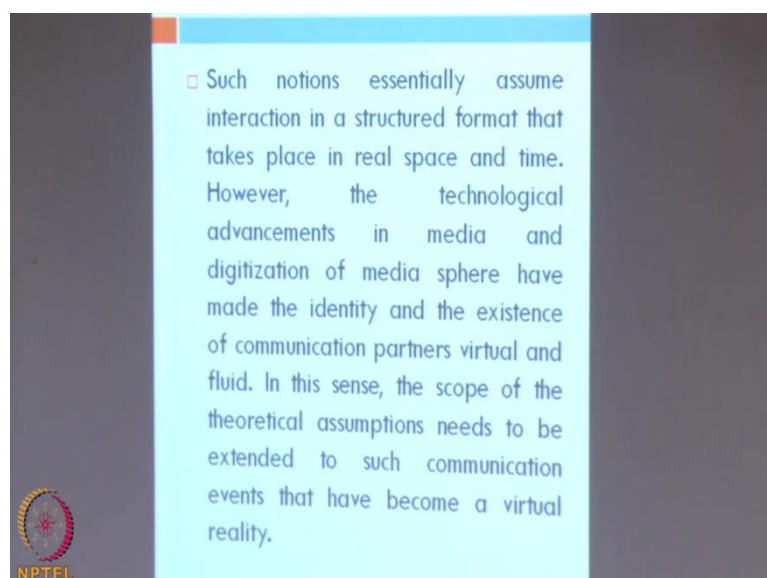
Such notions essentially assume such notions essentially assume interaction in a structured format that takes place in real space and time. However the technological advancements in media and digitisation of media sphere have made the identity and the existence of communication partners virtual and fluid. In this space, the scope of the theoretical assumptions needs to be extended to such communication events that have become a virtual reality.

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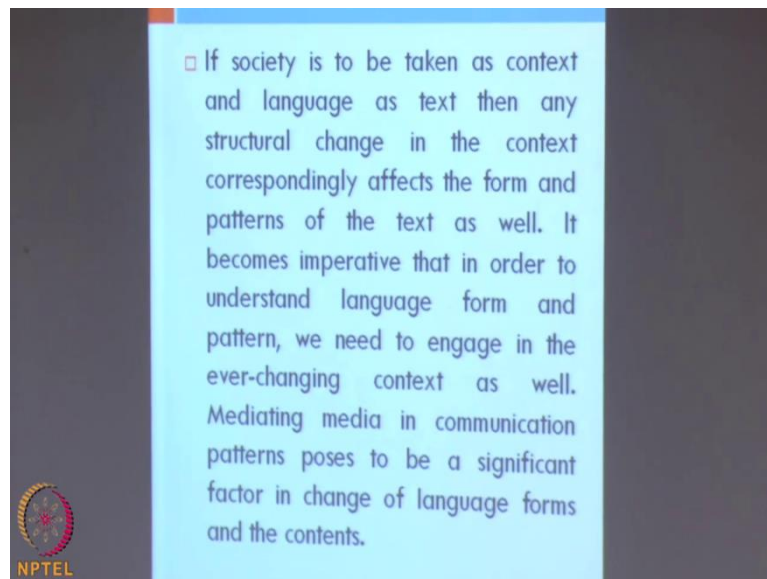
If society is to be taken as contacts and language as text, then only structural, any structural change in the context correspondingly affects the form and patterns of the text as well. It becomes imperative that in order to understand language forms and patterns, we need to understand the context as well. And mediating in communication pattern poses to be a significant factor in change of language forms and the contents.

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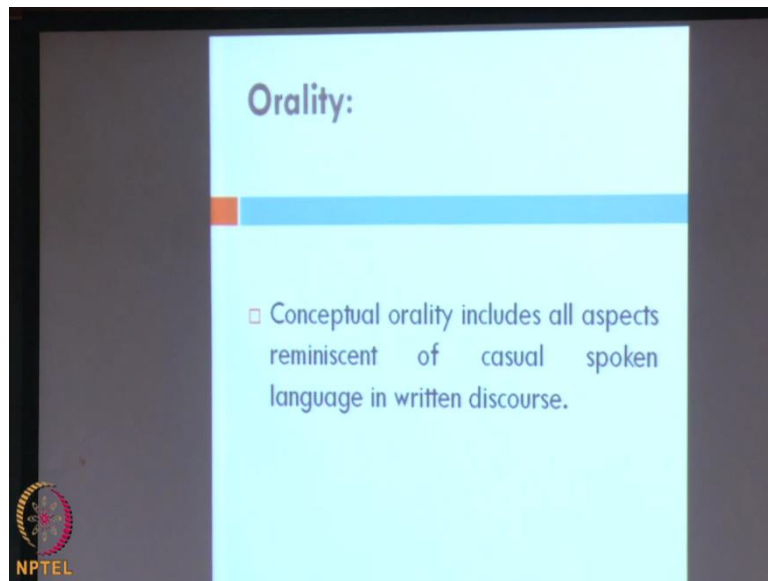
Now if you look at the characteristics of language and the variety of languages are available in digital space, you can have 3 distinct characteristics of such text in the media space one is one is orality, see, if you look at the digital text and digital media, the written text in the real space and the written text in the digital space, and when I say digital space, I am essentially referring to social media.

I am not talking about PDF format or soft copy of something uploaded on the net because that is that is not the text am talking about, I am talking about communication in in a synchronous medium, where we transcend the limits of time and space. And you know with anonymous partners we are communicating. So, this refers to one character is orality which refers to all aspects reminiscent of casual spoken language in written discourses.

And 2nd one is compensation. So, when you find gaps in such written texts, then we compensate with certain symbolic characters. What we used to call junk characters earlier, now all the junk characters have acquired semantic representations. They have meaning, # for example, it can, it consists of a meaning. Emoticon was included last year in the dictionary. Right. So, semiotics of compensation includes any attempt to compensate for the absence of facial expression or intonation patterns by the standardised means of keyboard and typeface. Compensation devices include emoticons, abbreviations that signifies various types of laughter, simulations or expressive prosody by iteration of letters and punctuation.

And 3rd is, the 3rd characteristic that restricts or defines language in digital media is economy because for example on Twitter you have limited characters. Right. So, the structure of sentence does not matter, the structure of language does not matter, it is the message which is important. Right. So, linguistic economy includes any strategy of shortening the message form. This theme is most clearly predicated on technology effects attributed to the necessity of speed in synchronous exchanges, to financial considerations or constraints on size of the message. Its counterpart, implicit in proceeding to themes, is the economy of expressiveness and the tendency to contextualize exchanges as informal, engaged and jointly accomplished drawing on means that often turn counter to linguistic economy.

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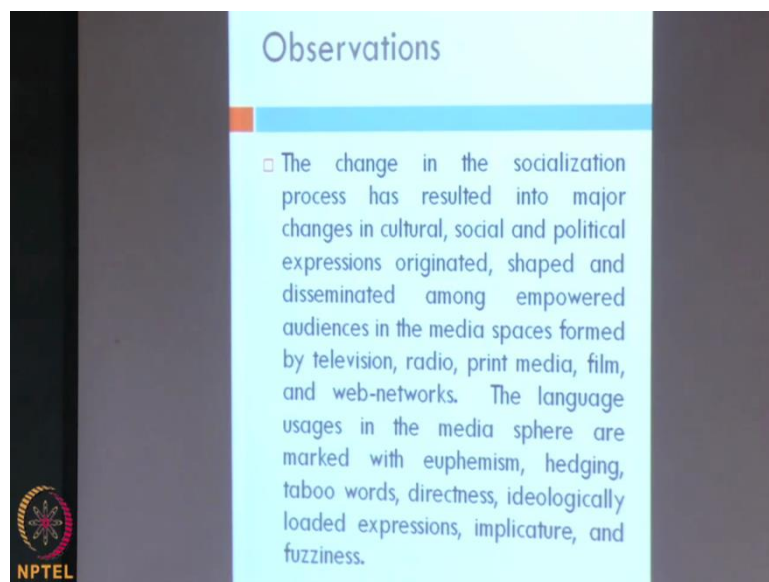
And I have a few observations based on my understanding on these language forms and they are not observations, conclusive observations because they are more in the shape of exploring questions, do not have any answers to these observations and I am leaving you with without any answer for you to find or fill the gap. The change in socialisation process has resulted into major changes in cultural, social and political expressions originated shade and disseminated among empowered audiences in the media spaces formed by television, radio, print media, film, and Web networks. The language usages in media sphere are marked with euphemism, hedging, taboo words, directness, ideologically loaded expressions, implicature and fuzziness.
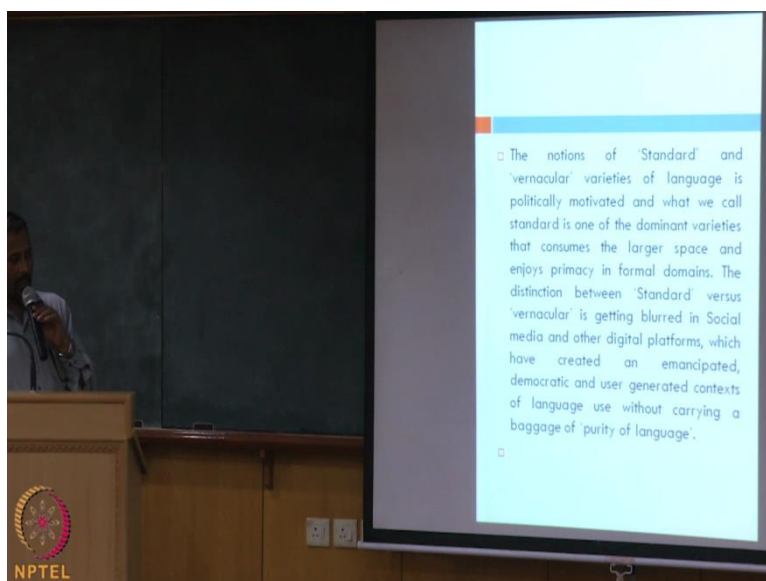
The notions of standard and vernacular varieties of language is politically motivated and what we call standard is one that one of the dominant varieties that consume the larger space and enjoy primacy in formal domains. The distension between standard versus vernacular is getting blurred in social media and other digital platforms which have created and emancipated democratic and user generated contexts of language use without caring a baggage of purity of language. Right, so this generation does not care actually.
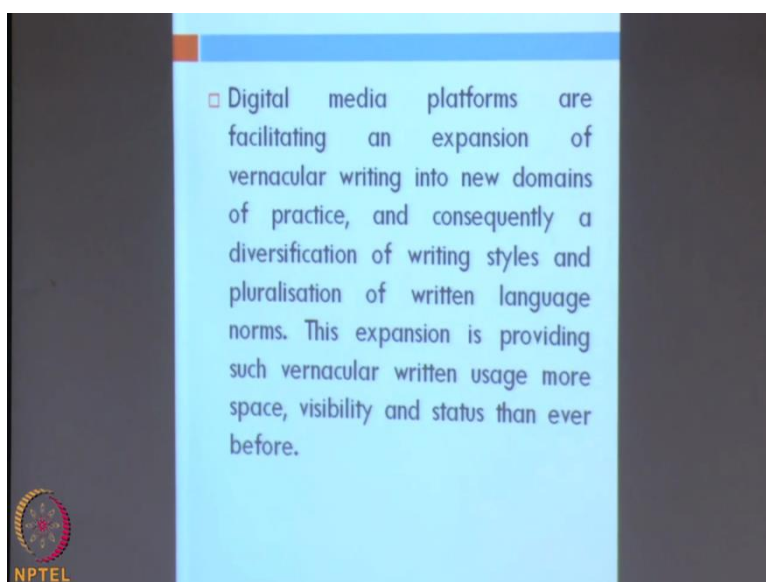
3rd observation is digital media platforms are facilitating into new domains of practice and consequently a diversification of writing styles and pluralisation of written language norms.

This expansion is providing such vernacular written usage more space, visibility and status than ever before.

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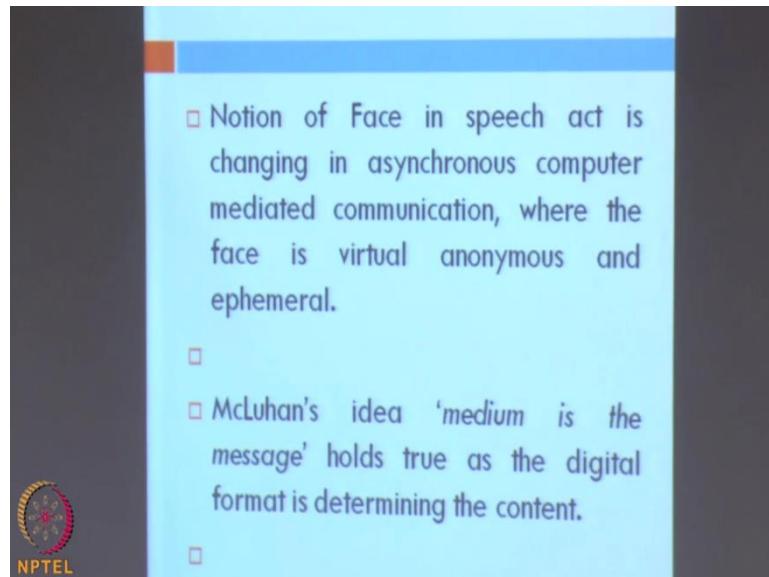
Notion of face in speech act is changing in a synchronous computer mediated communication where the face is virtual, anonymous and ephemeral. And McLuhan's idea "medium is the message" holds true as the digital format is determining the content.

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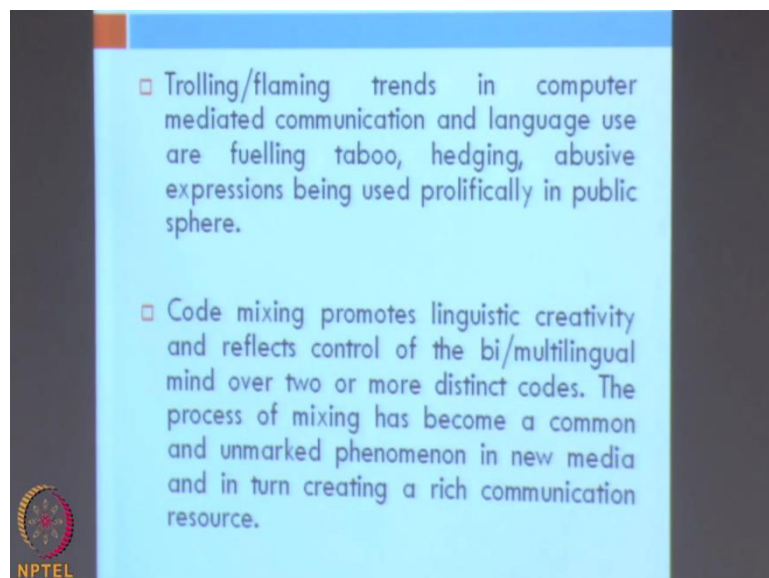
You must be familiar with this word trolling and flaming and and Anushka was trolled when Virat Kohli hit, send us to the semifinals and Virat had to (())(30:20) to Anushka. Anyways

trolling, flaming trends in computer meditate communication and language use are fuelling taboo, hedging, reason expressions being used prolifically in public sphere.

Code mixing promotes linguistic creativity and reflects control of bi or multilingual mind over 2 hours more distinct codes. The process of mixing has become a common and unmarked phenomenon in new media. And in turn creating a rich communication resource. Restrictions on time and space for typing characters reflect upon compromised conventions of writing and overall grammatical forms.

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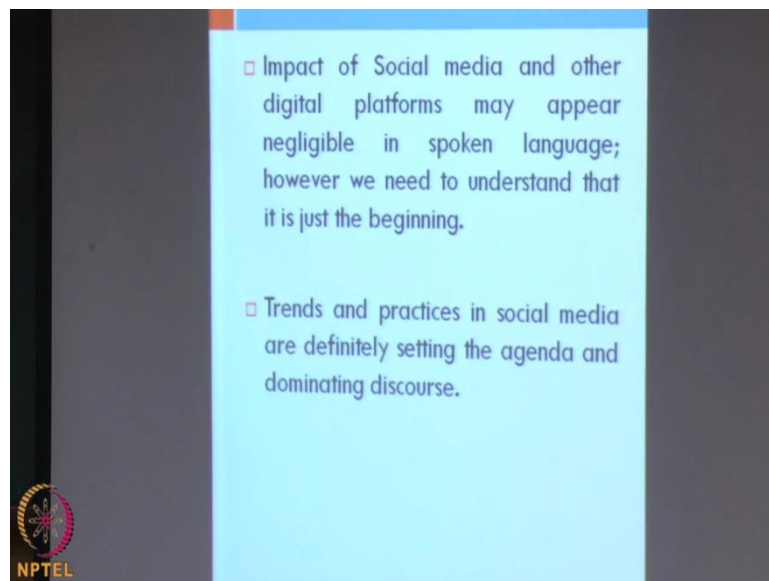
Impact of social media and other digital platforms may appear negligible in spoken language, however we need to understand that this is just the beginning. The trends and practices in social media are definitely setting the agenda and dominating discourse.

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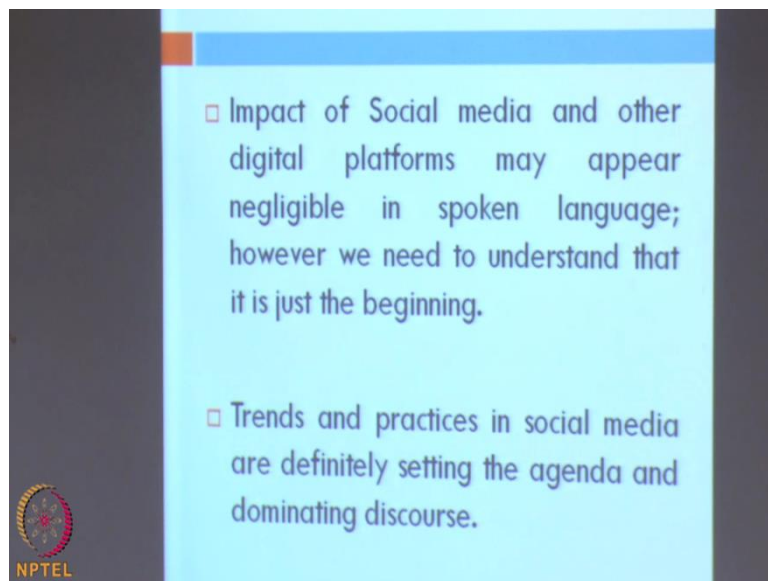
New media configuration or configuring the social order, redefining social roles, influencing our images and association and consequently legitimising our newly discovered identity. Digital media has created a democratic and flexible space for engagement and sharing. We are constructing meaning in multilateral and all directional media platforms.

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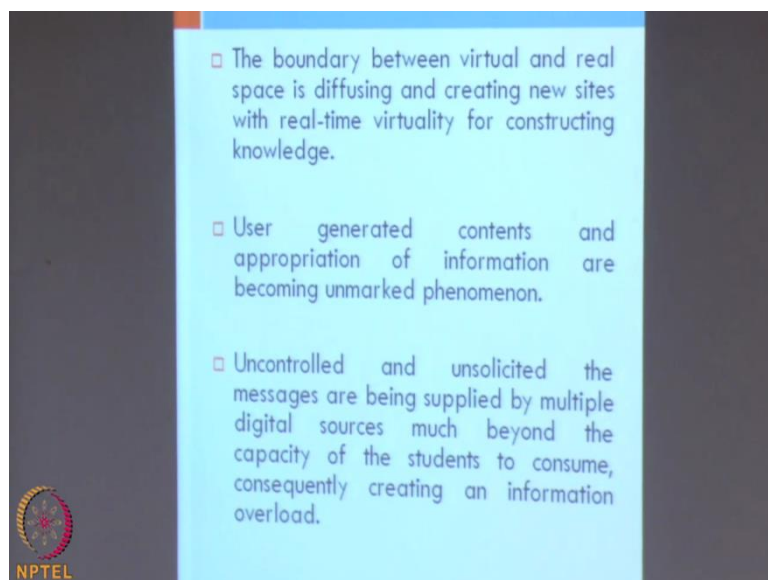
The boundary between virtual and real space is this using and creating new sites with real-time virtuality for constructing knowledge. User generated content and appropriation of information are becoming unmarked phenomenon. Uncontrolled and unsolicited messages supplied by multiple digital sources much beyond the capacity to consume are consequently creating an information overload.

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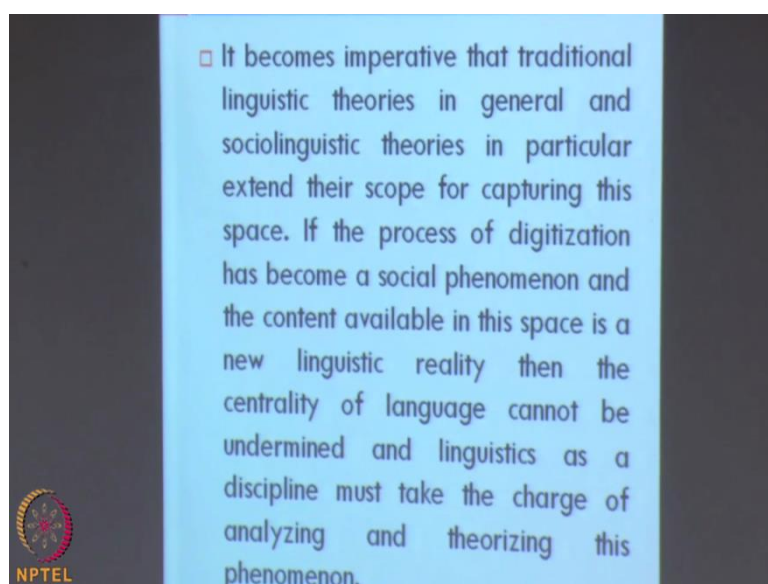
It becomes imperative that traditional linguistic theories in general and social linguistic theories in particular extend their scope for capturing this space. The process of digitisation has become a social phenomenon and the content available in this space is new linguistic reality then the centrality of language cannot be undermined and linguistics as well as other disciplines must take charge of analysing and theorising this phenomena.

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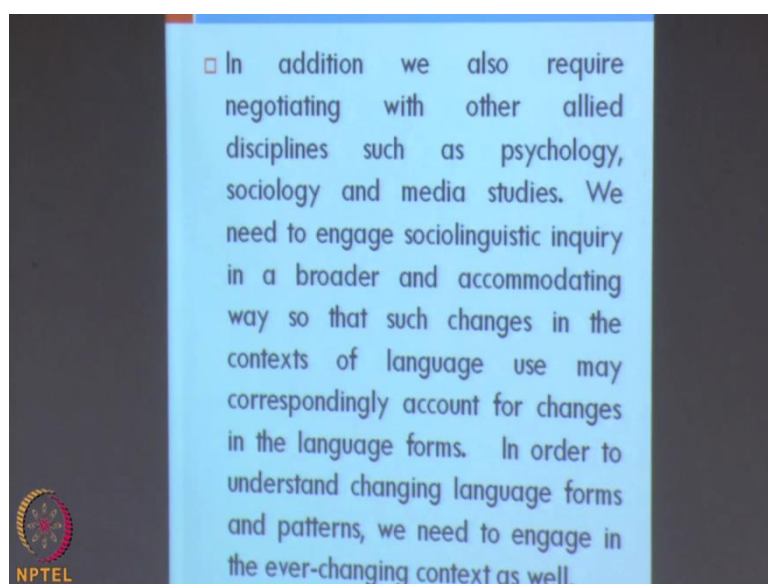
In addition we also required to negotiate with other allied disciplines such as psychological sociology and media studies. We need to engage social linguistic enquiries in a broader and accommodating we so that such changes in contact of language use may correspondingly

account for changes in language forms understand changing language forms and patterns, we need to engage in ever-changing context as well.

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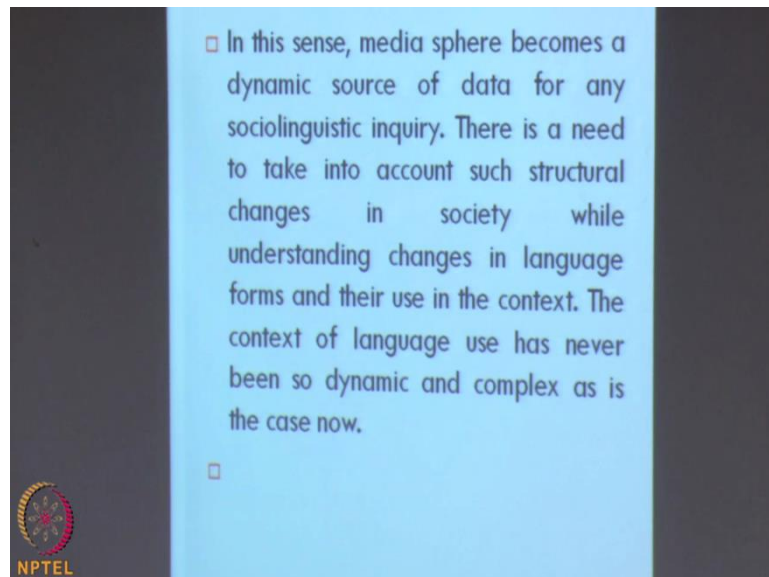
In this sense, media sphere becomes a dynamic source of data and anything for any social existing enquiry. And there is a need to take into account such structural changes in society which while understanding changes in language forms and their use in the context. The context of language use has never been so dynamic and complex as it is the case now.

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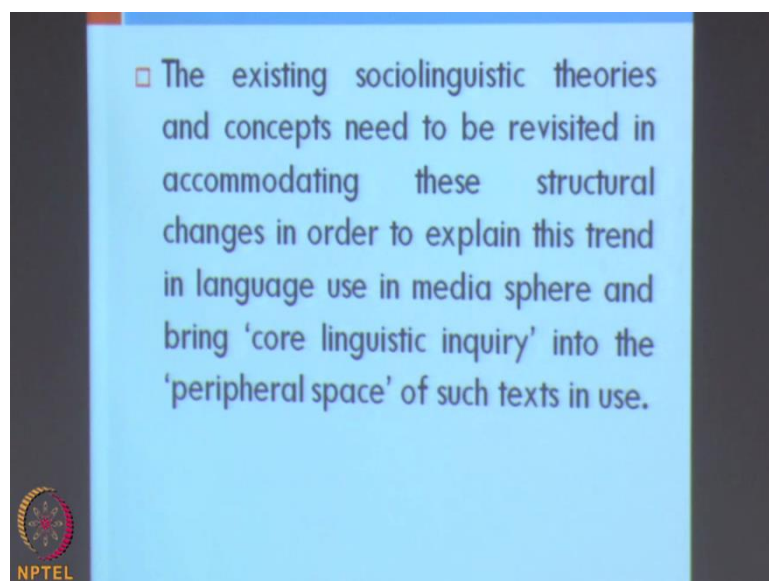
The existing socio linguistic theories and concepts need to be revisited in accommodating the structural changes in order to explain this trend in language use in media sphere and bring court linguistic enquiry into peripheral space of such texts in use. Thank you.

"Professor-student conversation starts".

Student:

My question is when someone logs onto the Internet for the first time and the Internet is a vast space, I mean he will never find the end of the Internet, because there are different corners to the Internet, I mean it is probably not right to say corners to the Internet but different facets to the Internet and each facet of the, each facet has their own particular lingo, right. And I do not see how that is particularly democratic because it is up to the user who visits these particular places to educate themselves and otherwise they are alienated and it becomes a space which is not accessible and I do not see how the Internet is viewed as a democratic space in that respect.

Dr Om Prakash:

There are 2 levels in which we can approach, one microlevel and one macrolevel. Well, I say Democratic space, I mean to say that Internet has created digital platforms where even the minor voices can be, can can find space. And you can opine and you can express yourself. As far as, as you said that there are compartments compartmentalised spaces where you know very close groups have very different lingos, of course we need to understand that we live in a very diverse world and Internet is not a homogenizing factor, that homogenizing everything.

The diversity will remain and I mean you have multiple groups and if you look at the whole idea of trolling for that matter or flaming for that matter, that is very undemocratic, that is very undemocratic, it is undemocratic but that is there but with, after micro macrolevel, Internet is digital platforms are dealing with space for engagement which was never the case earlier.

If you look at political socialisation for example, there is a theory called spiral of silence and this theory says that you know, spiral silence, we remain silent because we have the fear of being cornered as minority voice. So, this keeps on spiralling. But now Internet is giving you

that that democratic space very can voice your concerns, you can participate in discussions and the, see there is a hell lot of chaos on the Internet actually.

Because it is in a nascent stage and this is the beginning, so a lot of that of chaos is there. But I believe that pattern emerges out of a chaos. You may find certain undemocratic characteristics off the Internet but of course it has given you a platform to voice, right, your opinion. So, let us hope that in future because because the pattern will definitely emerge, it may be chaotic at the beginning.

Participant:

Once when you referred to David Crystals, it is okay with Crystals, hypothesis is in a way that we are going, since we are in a globalised world, we are ultimately probably going to end up being bilingual where English being the global language and then we have all these mother tongues.

I think that maybe a possibility, however I think that is really bad for instance, let me complete, I think there is a contradiction there, right because the system itself, even though while you are going towards a globalised world, you also tend to get profits from these localised economies, right, you (())(37:28), you also kind of you know for instance I feel that a lot of these studies done by American universities in proper departments of linguistics, in a sense are making showpieces of the remaining speakers of American Indian languages. Rights. People, tribes which have been targeted by them and which have very few speakers. So, I think there is a contradiction, so that is one thing I would like to hear your observation on.

The second is, I also think as a linguist, as linguists, we tend to, we have seen it that there is huge amount of variation which happens probably also because we have all the socio cultural factors. But even otherwise, there is something in our language ability or whatever when we are always changing our language. So, even if English becomes a globalised language and the only language, we will see a lot of variety of of English, right and there are multiple books which show that you have many many varieties of English.

So, there is always this contradiction, I think we probably need to point that out as well. So, maybe at, we could think of this together as to how within, with technology trying to globalise us, trying to narrow down our options, there is also counter force that is happening,

probably a part of our endowment, part of the varied new human nature that we have but we are also counteracting that, we are going against the trend. So, that is one thing.

So, the third thing, I think because you mentioned saying that there are these, you would like linguistic theories to look into these kinds of new forms that are coming out, I think one is that all these forms are at the morphological level, I do not think syntax is affected, right. I am not very sure because if it is…

Dr Om Prakash:

It is very early to say that, the influence of this data language, language in digital media is negligible in terms of spoken language and written language. But if you look at the structures in Twitter posts for example, you see little variations in text but that is almost negligible. But the process has started, I do not know, how long it will take to be to see the real change in syntactic structures, how long it will take, but the process has started.

Participant:

Right, I mean for instance if you write in English and if you lose out on some of, let us say you do not want to, you do not want to repeat or write the inflectional markings, you will still make sure that you have Virat and Anushka at the right places. Right. So, if you know that Anushka has fallen out of love with Virat, you would not like to put her in the subject position. Right. So, as long as you know the word order and the syntax of your spoken language, I think that affects your SMS or whatever Twitter account, you are definitely going to take care of some basic structure.

Otherwise, so one good, one interesting point of study, maybe if someone is interested even in the audience is to find out to what extent can we go when we write, what amount of variation can happen? So what is the point of divergence between spoken and written language? Right. So, we are definitely being very careful when we write but it is not that kind of textual language anymore and I think that is the entire value of your kind of research very are showing that it is no longer like a more formalised version of the spoken language, you are actually going against it. But to what extent, I think that will be a good point, maybe some…

Dr Om Prakash:

The whole idea of digitisation is too young to even see the predictable changes, you cannot predict on such a small set of data. But what I tried to emphasise is that process has began and let us see to what extent they will be able to change. See for that David Crystal factor, the whole idea of David Crystal about this English is missummarised, I feel as a linguist because there is nothing called English, a English or the English, so even if you start speaking English and everyone starts speaking English and English becomes language of technology, exclusively language of technology, still we will have hundreds of varieties of English.

So, in that sense we are not homogeneous at all. And digital media is also giving you say is for this vernacular so-called in course, I do not consider vernacular to be and (())(41:48)… This digital media is giving space to give prominence to such varieties which never got space in the formal public domain. So, that is one beautiful thing happening on Internet, you can document them, the documents being documented, they are being you know and people are deriving identity and pride out of it. So, that is a good thing happening to promote diversity.

Participant:

We are in India and we have Ambedkar Jayanti right, it may be a worthwhile exercise for some of us linguists out here to look at the impact that our Constitution, especially the eighth schedule has had all language variation, all language variation, right on recognising vernacular. So, one side you have media giving space to vernacular as you say, I do not know to what extent but on the other side, the presence of recognise languages within the eighth schedule, right, tells us that we are not supposed to look at vernaculars, even if we do, we have to consider them as dialects, right. So, maybe that contradiction that exists in our polity and then the technology coming from the government itself, they are the ones were also forcing…

Dr Om Prakash:

See, that is my point because in a formal way you have to accepted 22 languages as standard formal languages as enlisted in eighth schedule. But technology has defined discounting and today you find most, almost… Though the script maybe Roman, you may have Roman script for languages which do not have their own script but you find posts and sharing and socialisation process, the entire political socialisation process, go to Assam for example and see, it is the news in in mainstream media and print media and television and on radio, their political discourse and debates and discussions, all in standard Assamese. But if you look at

the FB post, if you look at my, one of my students has, I I do not, I am not on FB, Facebook, but I get to see the posts because she brings me data from there.

And you can see that the posts there are not in standard Assamese for example. And the digital space is so heated and the arguments are so heated, choked with emotions and at times become difficult to get meaning out of it but one beautiful thing about it is that digital media is giving them a platform to voice and that diversity is being promoted in digital media which is a very good thing about it.

Participant:

2 things, one regarding the Democratic democratisation process that happens through social media, like what ma'am and what you said, the vernacular and getting standardisation… I think it is mainly, I think it can be attributed to the absence often editor tool.

Dr Om Prakash:

Absence of…?

Participant:

An editor. In any other form of media you have an editor, an editor who gate keeps but here you have no gatekeeper and therefore the language is completely up to your liberty how to use the language. So, the absence of an editor is also a reason…

Dr Om Prakash:

If you refer to the first part of the talk, I said that Web 2 is different from Web 1 because Web 2 has allowed us to have user generated content. So, we are not passive consumers of information now because we are the ones who are creating, so we are creating and consuming and this consumption and creation of information is going hand-in-hand. As far as appropriation and censorship and editing is concerned, that is, that is why I call it a democratic space because you know you do not have any sanction, you do not have censorship, you do not have editing, so so you have an idea, you have expression and you have a space to express that.

Participant:

Imagine the scenario when social media becomes obsolete. Let us take an example of Orkut or take the example of Pager and even SMS to an extent. While SMS was prominent, I mean the regular text, so when it was prominent, we used U for you and I think we still use it but with the advent of Swipe, the swipe facility lets you, you know type the actual words without much…

Dr Om Prakash:

Now you have voice text.

Participant:

Yes. So, how much of the change will actually stay around? The language change that we say…

Dr Om Prakash:

My interest is not in technology because I know that the plc, what we call product life-cycle, product life-cycle of these IT products are so short that if Samsung launches one tab today, after 10 months it becomes obsolete. That is the life-cycle. It is**,** unlike other conventional telephones which stood for us for the last 50 years but they cannot sustain even you know 50 months. So, my interest is not technology, the technology will keep on changing, that is the only constant characteristic of this thing. My interest is that this changing technology and impact on language forms. So, even if technology changes, SMS becomes obsolete, all the social media platforms, digital media platforms that you have today, you have a different technology altogether, the language will remain.

Participant:

But the factor that decides the social media, the new or the existing will keep changing and accordingly the lingo change will also change. I mean to say that presently which seems the language change that we observe today is persisting to the media that we have. So, which seems that we observe is not know, I think it is too young to be studied upon, it keeps changing.

Dr Om Prakash:

That is what I am saying, it is too early to predict but I am trying to underline the fact that we need to pay attention to it as a linguists, because language forms are changing, contexts are

changing and of course technology will definitely change, technology will not remain forever, any technology.

Participant:

Just a small observation. I have recently read this book called Twitterature and this was by 2 Stanford University students. They have rewritten the entire, starting from whether it is Shakespeare to the latest JK Rowling's texts, they have stuck to the Twitter structure and they have written it in 140 characters and it is too easy to read, I don't know, all of us, you know we consider certain texts very sacrosanct when we read Jane Austen or Hardy, all these classics but then when they have redone the entire thing, it also poses a lot of questions to ask as language users and language generator because we have read so many versions of Shakespeare starting from the Marxists, feminists, psychoanalytic, different reversions have been done, when it is the performance or…

Different drafts have been done. Now, this particular kind of rendition also needs to be given little interest and probe into because what they have done is they have rewritten the entire text and I do not know, when you read it, it is just a new phase and it stops within that 140 characters and I think it takes a lot of control and mastery over the particular language to be doing that kind of job. So, as linguists or… I am just thinking aloud whether this is the digital version or this is a futuristic kind of version of a classic or what is that, I am just thinking aloud. I am sure you are familiar with the text that time…

Dr Om Prakash:

I think there is no question, right. It is not the question.

Participant:

No, it is not a question, I am just telling you.

Dr Om Prakash:

Of course, that is what I pointed out that when you look at the economy, orality, compensation and economy, the characters which defined the language in digital media… 140 characters and the idea that you have… Not even letters, characters, even the full stop and the comma…

Participant:

Alphabet and symbol, every character that is typed, every character that is typed or keyed in, a space also I think is included.

Dr Om Prakash:

Yes, of course, lots of creativity are there. Yes, press of keyboard. Every press of keyboard, whatever you get as a response on screen is a character.

Participant:

Not a question to him, it is like, when you pointed out, it is an observation on what you said, it is just my thinking and my idea on that. That you said, okay, U, now we are using instead of you, we just use U. Now, for me, yes, it is not too early, it is not too early a thing to changes, it is too early to predict, right but not too early to read it or research on it because if we take history and the great vowel shift and how it happened, so wif became wife and whose became house and we have started accepting it. Or mathematics, maths was onetimes a slang and now we are like, so it was mathematics and all of a sudden it became maths and that was a slang.

So, we never know 20 years down the line or 10 years or 30 years down the line, the spelling would be instead of love, you would be writing luv. So, the spelling would change from love LOVE to LUV and maybe 50 years down the line we would start instead of saying LOVE, we would say LUV and then read and then the linguists then would read, okay, initially it was called LOVE and now it is pronounced as LUV. So, it is not, it is early to predict but it is not early to study this because this is a change and I think the social media, it is not the network society or Internet, it is the social media that is responsible for a language change and change is the only constant.

Participant:

I asked him about whether you are talking about new linguistic programming or natural language processing, so he was interested in natural language processing, that means TCS is already developing a kind of software which is going to replace all the personnel in the call centres, that means it will be reacting to all the questions you are going to ask, mostly the technical questions you know.

So, there is a kind standardisation taking place through technology. When the machine takes over, there will be a worldwide standardised language but when you are expressing your, our

emotions as human beings that tend to change because otherwise we will be boat depth, if you use the same language. So, there may be able to types of languages, one standardised for language for technology and business, another for human emotions.

"Professor-student conversation ends."